

SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship Program

There are two types of federal fellowships: **SRCD Congressional Policy Fellowship** and **SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellowship**. Both fellowships provide opportunities for researchers to come to Washington, D.C. to learn about policy development, implementation and evaluation and to use developmental science outside of the academic setting to inform public policy.

About the Federal Fellowship Program

The SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship Program is a full-time immersion experience in Washington, D.C. and runs from September 1st through August 31st. Fellows are placed in either a federal agency or congressional office placement and serve as resident scholars in their placements. The SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellowship may be renewed for a second year at the agency's discretion and, under rare circumstances, the SRCD Congressional Policy Fellowship may be extended four months to the end of the legislative session.

The Federal Fellowship Program aims to:

1. Contribute to the effective use of scientific knowledge about child development in the formation, implementation, and evaluation of public policy.
2. Educate the scientific community about the development of public policy.
3. Establish a more effective liaison between developmental scientists and the federal policy-making mechanisms.



SRCD Congressional Policy Fellowship

The SRCD Congressional Policy Fellowship Program is designed to provide greater interaction between the developmental research community and Congress. Placements can involve working for a congressional committee, in the office of a member of Congress, or in a congressional support agency that works directly for members or committees of Congress.

Examples of Congressional Fellow Responsibilities

Although the responsibilities of each fellow vary by office, past fellows have worked on drafting legislation, bringing research to bear on re-authorization of programs or appropriations, and advising members of Congress through research that bears on federal programs and services affecting children, youth and families. Fellows may also prepare or assist in congressional hearings and briefings or preparing briefs and speeches.

Congressional Fellowship Placement Process

Following the two-week science policy orientation program at the American Association for the

Advancement of Science (AAAS) in September, fellows will interview with congressional offices to determine a placement. AAAS organizes the placement process. Placements for SRCDC Congressional Policy Fellows are not determined until after the orientation process in September of the fellowship year. Ethics rules prohibit contact between fellows and offices until that time.



SRCDC Executive Branch Policy Fellowship

The SRCDC Executive Branch Policy Fellowship is designed to provide greater interaction between the developmental science research community and federal agencies.

Examples of Executive Branch Fellow Responsibilities

SRCDC Executive Branch Fellows are involved with bridging research and policy through a variety of responsibilities. Past fellows have been provided with training opportunities to work on programmatic and research funding; the federal regulatory process; program evaluation for federal programs; and other implementation aspects of federal policymaking. For example, some fellows' placements have provided them with opportunities to contribute to study design for congressionally mandated and federally-funded

studies, to write RFA's and Program Announcements for federal grant programs, to contribute to grant review for extramural grant applications, and to develop new research agendas to inform programs and policies that serve diverse populations.

Executive Branch Fellowship Placement Process

When applicants to the SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellowship visit Washington, D.C. for their interviews in the spring, they will also attend a Federal Agency Informational Session with representatives of placement agencies. Selected candidates are then offered the SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellowship pending finding an appropriate placement.

Federal agencies then interview the candidates and make the matches for placements. While the selected candidates typically secure placements, receipt of a placement cannot be guaranteed. The final offer of the fellowship is not confirmed until a placement is finalized, which can take up to two months.

Benefits of Being a Federal Policy Fellow

Be immersed in policy work in Washington, D.C.

- The fellowship will help developmental scientists at all career stages to:
 - Understand the linkages between research and policy
 - Communicate more effectively with policymakers
 - Formulate more informed and useful questions for policy-related research
- Fellows are members of the [Science and Technology Fellowship Program](#) of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which includes fellows from a variety of scientific disciplines.
- The SRCD policy team works to facilitate the fellows' experience and are available as a resource throughout the year.

Participate in numerous training opportunities.

- Two-week science policy orientation sponsored by AAAS at the start of the fellowship year.
- Two-day training focused on child and family policy, hosted by SRCD.
- Monthly seminars for fellows with topics focusing on child development and public policy, as well as career development.

- Extensive career development programming (e.g., writing a resume, communicating science) and social events through the fellowship year, hosted by AAAS.

Receive a stipend, health insurance allocation, and relocation allowance.

- Stipends for fellows follow the federal government pay scale, taking into consideration previous experience and salary.
- An allocation for purchase of health insurance is provided with the amount depending upon number of family members covered.
- SRCD provides fellows with an allowance of up to \$1,300 for moving expenses if they moved 50 or more miles.
- *Note: Fellows hired as temporary employees of their placement agency will receive their salary and benefits directly from the agency and are not eligible for a relocation allowance. However, many expenses for employment-related relocation are tax deductible for moves more than 50 miles from your previous work location ([see the IRS guidelines](#)).

Receive a professional development fund.

- Fellows receive an allowance of up to \$2,800 to use towards professional development opportunities during their fellowship year.
- *Note: Fellows who are temporary federal employees do not receive a separate allowance for professional development. This will be at the discretion of the host office.

Join an extensive network of fellowship alumni.

- The SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship began in 1978 with congressional placements. In 1991, the fellowship program added placements in federal executive branch agencies. The SRCD State Policy Fellowship began recently in 2017.
- To date, there is a network of approximately 200 fellowship alumni.

Learn about the difference between the Federal Congressional and Executive Branch Fellowships, the types of work past fellows have done, the career trajectories of fellowship alumni, and more in this informational webinar presented by Dr. Kelly Fisher, SRCD's Director for Policy, and Dr. Ruth Friedman, former SRCD

Congressional fellow and co-lead for the SRCD U.S. State Policy Fellowship.



My experience as a fellow has been incredibly rewarding. It has allowed me to utilize my expertise...to inform and shape conversations that will directly impact the lives of children and families...I am incredibly grateful for the experience and look forward to utilizing the knowledge that I have gained to promote communication between the policy and research communities to better shape our nation's services for children and families.

— Former SRCD Congressional Fellow

[Read brief articles written by SRCD Federal Policy Fellows about their diverse experiences](#)

Who Should Apply?

Both the SRCD Executive Branch and Congressional Policy Fellowships are designed for scholars from a variety of backgrounds and scientific disciplines.

- Applicants must receive a doctoral-level degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D.) relevant to child development prior to the start of the fellowship.
- Applicants must demonstrate exceptional competence in an area of child development research.
- The fellowships are a training opportunity suited for individuals throughout their career development. Early, mid-career, and advanced-career applicants are encouraged to apply.

[How to Apply](#)

Career Paths Following the Federal Fellowship Program

SRCD Federal Policy Fellows take different career paths following their fellowship experience.

- **Begin or return to careers in academia.** Approximately a third of fellows follow this path with strengthened credentials in policy-relevant research and an ability to teach students about the complex issues involved in bridging science and policy.
- **Continue to work in public policy and/or research settings.** Some fellows remain in Washington D.C. and work in federal agencies. For example, fellows have gone on to work at federal agencies such as the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).
- **Transition to careers with research organizations.** Other fellows pursue careers with organizations that bridge research and policy. For examples, fellows have gone on to work at research organizations such as American Institutes for Research, Child Trends, Learning Policy Institute, and SRI International.

Questions?

Contact us via email at policyfellowships@srcd.org or call 202-800-0666.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)